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Dear Ways and Means Committee,

My experience with observation status started on a typically Sunday morning when I went to give my elderly father his daily medicine. A man who never complains to me about anything said his chest hurt. Being a concerned daughter I did what any of you would do and took him to the nearest hospital. At the hospital he was put in a room and given some tests to try and determine the cause of his chest pain. The doctor informed me that my father would be admitted into the hospital for additional testing and evaluation. After hours of waiting he was brought upstairs and put in a room.

While I was driving on my way to work a representative of the hospital called me and rattled off some sort of medical disclaimer about observation status; when I specifically asked her what does that mean "his insurance is not going to pay for this" she offered me no further explanation in terms that someone who is not in the insurance business would understand. She just paused for a few seconds and said no...

On Monday night his doctors told me that they felt that my father should remain in the hospital and then go to a rehab. He was very unsteady on his feet from lying in bed, having difficulties getting in and out of chairs and going to the bathroom. He was also presenting signs of a respiratory infection. Tuesday afternoon his doctor called me and said that he was being admitted as an inpatient and would go to rehab in a few days. I no sooner hung the phone up from her and a social worker from the hospital called me and insisted I take my father home. When I questioned her she said that the doctor was wrong!! (Do social worker go to medical school); and offer me no explanation or reasonable alternative, and said my father condition was not the hospital's problem! This social worker was calling my ninety year old mother and insisting she come get him as well.....

My father was very ill when the hospital told me to come and get him; he could not even lift his head to look at me..... He was sitting in a chair hunched over, his skin was grey, and he had a fever which he had been running off and on for a while and had become severely de-conditioned from this 4 day ordeal.. The hospital refused to change my father's status, they discharged him without my signature even though there were some dedicated doctors and nurses who believe he was too ill to go home.

I had to put my father in rehab on private pay and was so grateful I could do that. He had a very dangerous upper respiratory infection which combined with his medical history could have ended his life. He was severely de-conditioned from being in a bed for days and basally in far worst condition then when I brought him to the hospital in the first place.

The wonderful nurse at the rehab, IMMEDIATELY look at my father and put him on antibiotics stating that there was nothing in my father's medical report from the hospital about his mucus and how it was a very obvious sign of infection. My father is at home now with us but he has not fully recovered to the condition he was in before I took him to the hospital. We are not sure he ever will. My family is blessed to have had the means to pay for his care. Please tell me what elderly people do who do not have any resources or family and friends to fight for them!!!!

My father is from the great generation that built this country somehow I feel that has been forgotten in Washington. While I understand the need to cut fraud and waste it felt like to me they are punishing the people who work for these benefits and allowing numbers guys to practice medicine without a license.

Members of the committee is this how you plan to cut waste, by putting elderly people who have earned their benefits at risk!!! Surely there must be a better way.

Regards,

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